

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MADRID 456

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SP
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ:
I. SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY

1. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ INVITED ME TO LUNCH WITH HIM JANUARY 18 IN HIS OFFICE AT THE MONCLOA PALACE, (FORMERLY USED FOR VISITING HEADS OF STATE), WHERE HE NOW MAINTAINS BOTH HIS OFFICE AND HIS RESIDENCE. THE ONLY OTHER PERSON PRESENT WAS FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA WHO SAID LITTLE, ALTHOUGH IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE AND SUAREZ HAVE A WARM RELATIONSHIP. WE COVERED A SERIES OF TOPICS REPORTED IN THIS TEL AND FOUR FOLLOWING ONES.

2. SUAREZ WAS MOST FRIENDLY AND WE HAD A RELAXED CONVERSATION OF OVER AN HOUR AND A HALF. SUAREZ IS ARTICULATE AND DECISIVE IN HIS PRESENTATIONS AND IS CLEARLY IF FULL COMMAND OF GOVERNMENT. HE LOOKS WAN AND TIRED WHICH IS NOT SURPRISING DUE TO AN ENORMOUSLY HEAVY WORK SCHEDULE. HE EATS AND SLEEPS LITTLE. ASIDE FROM SECURITY ASPECTS OF HIS MOVE TO MONCLOA, HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT THIS WAY HE CAN WORK ON HIS PAPERS AT ALL TIMES OF DAY AND NIGHT.

3. SUAREZ BEGAN BY SAYING THAT I WAS THE FIRST AMBASSADOR
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HE HAD ASKED TO LUNCH PRIVATELY WITH HIM. HE HAD DONE SO IN PART BECAUSE HE PERSONALLY WISHED TO UNDERLINE THE VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE WHICH HE ATTACHED TO CLOSE AND CONTINUING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. THESE RELATIONS WERE THE CORNERSTONE OF SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE SO IN THE FUTURE. IT WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS CONTINUING AND SATISFACTORY RELATION-

SHIP THAT HE WANTED THE USG TO HAVE A FULL EXPLANATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE DETERMINATION OF SPAIN UNDER THE MONARCHY TO PURSUE MORE ACTIVELY AND AGGRESSIVELY A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH WOULD BE MORE IN KEEPING WITH SPAIN'S SIZE AND HISTORIC TRADITIONS. WITH THE CHANGE OF REGIME IT WAS NOW POSSIBLE TO SEEK AND MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE WITH VARIOUS OTHER AREAS WHERE PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD BEEN EITHER NOTHING OR JUST LIP-SERVICE. SPAIN HAS THUS DECIDED TO CONCENTRATE ON CERTAIN SPECIFIC AREAS, NAMELY, EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND LATIN AMERICA.

3. IN DESCRIBING THE NEW DIRECTION OF SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY, SUAREZ BEGAN WITH EUROPE, SAYING THAT HE WAS SURE WE UNDERSTOOD ALREADY WHAT SPAIN HOPED TO ACHIEVE THERE. SPAIN, WHICH IS "ATLANTIC" AND "EUROPEAN", DESIRED TO PLAY A FULL ROLE IN THAT CONTEXT. (HE MADE NO SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO EITHER THE EC OR NATO.)

4. WITH REGARD TO THE IBERIAN PENINSULA, SUAREZ STRESSED THE CLOSE TIES WHICH HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL. A DEMOCRATIC AND NON-COMMUNIST PENINSULA WOULD BE A STRONG CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN SOLIDARITY. SUAREZ COMMENTED PARTICULARLY ON PORTUGUESE APPRECIATION FOR US ASSISTANCE.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE ARAB WORLD, SPAIN'S INTERESTS WERE LARGELEY OF AN ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL NATURE AND SPAIN HOPED TO BUILD MEANINGFUL TIES WITH MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES.

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6. THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF SPAIN'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE ON LATIN AMERICA. THE KING, HE, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT SPAIN COULD PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE MAKING FULL USE OF ITS HISTORICAL TIES WITH THAT AREA AND THE NEW SENSE OF IDENTIFICATION BETWEEN THE MONARCHY AND MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. HE EMPHASIZED THAT WHATEVER SPAIN MIGHT THEN DO SHOULD BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT IN ENHANCING OVERALL WESTERN STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS. HE FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT SPAIN'S ACTIVITY IN LATIN AMERICA COULD AND SHOULD BE OF HELP TO THE US. THE US HAD BEEN ALONE IN ITS EFFORTS IN LATIN AMERICA WITH LITTLE OR NO SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. SPAIN WAS CONVINCED THAT IF HER NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH LATIN AMERICA WERE TO SUCCEED IT SHOULD QUICKLY GET OUT OF THE RHETORICAL PHASE AND INTO SOMETHING MORE PRACTICAL. THE GOS WAS NOW WORKING ON A CONCRETE PROGRAM TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE NEW POLICY.

7. OREJA COMMENTED THAT IN DEFINING ITS NEW LATIN AMERICAN POLICY SPAIN WOULD DO SO WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AS TO TYPE OF GOVERNMENT OR IDEOLOGY IN LA COUNTRIES (IE, DEMOCRATIC, RIGHT WING OR CUBAN). SUAREZ AGREED WITH THIS COMMENT INDICATING TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD BE DIVISIVE AND COULD REDUCE THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF SPANISH INFLUENCE. HE THOUGHT THAT IF SPAIN CONTINUED SUCCESSFULLY, AS HE HOPED AND EXPECTED IT WOULD, ON THE ROAD TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC REGIME, THIS IN ITSELF COULD BE HELPFUL IN INFLUENCING SOME LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

8. I THANKED SUAREZ FOR HIS EXPOSITION ON SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY WHICH I SAID HAD BEEN PREVIEWED IN PART FOR ME BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER. I BELIEVED THAT THE USG WOULD WELCOME A GREATER ROLE BY SPAIN IN LATIN AMERICA AND SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH AS SPANISH PLANS DEVELOP.

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